St. Anne's National School

Chapel Road, Tangeragee,
Bailieborough,
Co. Cavan.
A82 DR53

School Roll Number: 18059J

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

This policy was formulated by St. Anne's National School following a consultation process and in accordance with the relevant legislation, such as the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) as set out by the Department of Education and Youth. It was ratified by the Board of Management. It is also available to read on the school's website

St. Anne's N.S.
Scoil Naomh Áine

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

1. Introduction

All partners in St. Anne's National School (N.S.) are committed to providing a supportive learning environment that will promote children's learning and encourage regular school attendance. Staff will provide a positive well structured learning environment so that children feel welcome and comfortable at school.

The pupils, parents, staff, and Board of Management (BoM) of St Anne's N.S. promote inclusion, respect and dignity for each child and recognise that good school attendance is vital. It allows all children to receive the opportunity to reach their full potential. Irregular attendance is discouraged and the school will take steps to support children whose attendance is unsatisfactory.

2. Rationale

The BoM wishes to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Youth policy, such as: The Education Act (1998) and The Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Circular 0028/2013, and DEIS Action Planning for School Improvement. The BoM wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

St. Anne's N.S. seeks to promote and support all aspects of the children's wellbeing as a core value of our ethos. Guided by our mission statement we strive to ensure that all our students can flourish in an environment that is nurturing, supportive and progressive. We believe that there is a clear and direct link between regular school attendance and pupil progress. We recognise the importance of parents/guardians and school staff working together to achieve optimal attendance for each child in our care.

3. Aims of the Statement of Strategy

The aims of this strategy are:

- To meet the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Section 22 with regard to our school attendance strategy.
- To support and sustain the positive attitudes to learning already evident in our school and to highlight their importance for all students.
- To underpin the importance of school attendance and punctuality and their impact on children's learning and wellbeing.
- To clarify procedures around matters relating to registration, attendance, punctuality and recording.
- To ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities with regard to school attendance.
- To ensure awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- Document our approaches to promoting and sustaining good attendance and addressing related matters

4. Expectations around Attendance

4.1. Attendance is crucial for effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences. Therefore, the school places great emphasis on regular attendance in communications with parents and pupils.

4.2. The BoM promotes and encourages regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. We expect children to have full attendance at school unless they are ill or have medical appointments. We fully understand that there may also be urgent family reasons why a child cannot attend school, especially in the case of bereavement and endeavour to offer our support in these instances.

4.3. The Aladdin app is the school's system for recording attendance.

4.3. In the case of absences, Parents/Guardians must provide an explanation to the school in one of the following ways:

- Aladdin app
- Telephone school office
- Email
- Child's homework journal

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that all absences are explained to the school.

4.4. In St. Anne's N.S., we commend children who have excellent attendance. Annual Attendance Awards are presented to children who were absent for two or less days throughout the school year. Other attendance initiatives such as monthly attendance drives, individual and class awards for most improved and best monthly attendance assist in ensuring attendance is always a key area of focus for our school.

4.5. We want to acknowledge improvements in overall school attendance. Monthly figures are reported in Le Chéile and progress is celebrated both in class and at school assemblies.

3. Monitoring, Recording & Reporting Attendance

3.1. Recording pupil attendance & early leaving

3.1.1. Pupil attendance is recorded daily by using Aladdin software. School begins each day at 8.50am and Roll is called by 9.50am.

3.1.2. A pupil will be marked either present or absent at the time of the roll call and there will be no provision for adjusting the Roll Book (in accordance with Circular 0028/2013).

3.1.3. Where a pupil arrives late, they must report to the school office with their parent/guardian. The school secretary shall record the pupil's time of arrival on Aladdin following sign-in.

3.1.4. Parents/Guardians must inform the school and class teacher in writing if their child needs to leave school early during the school day. It is advised that, insofar as possible, appointments should be made for children to attend outside of school hours. If an appointment must to be made during school hours, a written explanation must be provided to the school office stating clearly the time of appointment. Appointment cards for dentist, or other medical appointments, must be submitted in advance and a copy will be retained by the school. If there are frequent absences for medical reasons, parents/guardians may be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's certificate. Students are expected to return to school following their appointment whenever possible.

3.1.5. Children may only be collected from the school office by a designated adult when leaving early during the school day. Children who leave early are recorded on Aladdin and the time and reason noted.

3.1.6 Where a pupil is subject to a School Attendance Notice (SAN), the EWO has advised that the pupil should be marked present if they attend school, even where the pupil arrives after 9.50am.

3.1.7. The school proactively reviews, identifies and acts upon attendance patterns and issues.

3.2. Recording and reporting pupil absences

3.2.1. When students have recorded ten and fifteen absences, an automatic text message is sent to inform the parents that St Anne's is obliged to report all absences in excess of 20 days to Tusla Education Support Services (TESS).

3.2.2. Notably, it is acknowledged that children must stay at home if feeling unwell, to show respect for the health of the school community. As such, during exceptional times of high risk of infection (as advised by the HSE) e.g. Covid 19, we may pause the automatic text alert messages.

3.2.3. Parents/guardians of a child whose attendance is of concern are invited to meet with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal (DP), Class Teacher and the HSCL. The EWO from the TESS may attend this meeting also to discuss attendance concerns and work in partnership to find a solution which prioritises the wellbeing of the student.

3.2.4. The school is obliged to inform the EWO in writing of any child who has been absent for 20 days or more in a school year. Where attendance is irregular, where a child has been removed from the school register or where a child has been expelled or suspended from school for a period of 6 days or more, the EWO will be informed.

3.2.5. Each child's attendance and punctuality records are documented on their annual summer report.

3.3. Removal from the roll

3.3.1. The school secretary will liaise with the HSCL and DP if a pupil's name needs to be removed from the class Roll Book (Leabhar Rolla).

3.3.2. According to Circular 0028/2013, the removal of a pupil's name from the Roll Book occurs when:

a) St. Anne's N.S. becomes aware that the pupil has left the school upon receipt of communication from the pupil's new school, whether that school is located within or outside the state.

b) On the first Monday following the absence of 20 consecutive school days.

3.3.3. The designated Assistant Principal submits the Student Absence Reports (SAR) for Period 2 (end-Dec) and Period 4 (end-June).

3.3.4. If there is concern over a student's attendance, an Educational Welfare Referral will be made to TESS. Parents are informed when referrals are made.

3.3.5. An Annual Attendance Report (AAR) on the attendance levels at the end of each school year, is submitted to TESS.

4. Strategy for Promoting Attendance

The BoM, staff, students, parent body and wider community of St. Anne's N.S. work in partnership to create a school culture that is welcoming, nurturing and inclusive. The BoM is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere, which is conducive to promoting good school attendance.

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.

The following three areas detail the way in which the school works collaboratively to promote good attendance among the school community.

4.1. DEIS Action Planning - Attendance Target Setting

4.1.1. As a DEIS Band 1 school, St. Anne's N.S. recognises that regular school attendance is fundamental to improving educational outcomes, promoting pupil wellbeing and ensuring equality of opportunity for every child. Attendance is therefore a key priority within the school's DEIS Action Plan and is embedded in the school's continuous school improvement processes.

4.1.2. The school adopts an evidence-informed approach to attendance improvement by using accurate attendance data to identify trends, establish realistic targets, monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Attendance data is analysed on a whole-school, class, cohort and individual pupil basis throughout the school year to identify patterns of absenteeism, persistent absence, punctuality concerns and emerging attendance issues.

4.1.3. Annual attendance targets are developed as part of the DEIS Action Planning process. These targets are informed by:

- Attendance reports generated through Aladdin;
- TESS attendance data where appropriate;
- Baseline school attendance data;
- Attendance trends as identified by Attendance Committee
- Pupil, parent and staff consultation;
- Knowledge of barriers affecting attendance within the school community.

4.1.4. Targets are designed to focus on improving overall attendance rates, reducing persistent absenteeism, promoting punctuality and strengthening pupil engagement with school.

4.1.5. Progress towards these targets is monitored regularly by the school's Attendance Committee. The Committee meets formally on a bi-monthly basis to:

- Review attendance data and identify trends;
- Identify pupils at risk of poor attendance or emerging absenteeism;
- Monitor the effectiveness of interventions;
- Coordinate supports for pupils and families;
- Determine whether additional interventions or referrals to external agencies are required.

4.1.6. The school recognises that attendance difficulties often arise from complex social, emotional, economic or health-related factors. Accordingly, interventions are supportive and are tailored to the individual needs of pupils and families. Supports may include:

- Early engagement with parents/guardians;
- Home visits by the HSCL Coordinator where appropriate;
- Mentoring and attendance support through the SCP;

- Wellbeing and inclusion supports;
- Referrals to the TESS where statutory thresholds are met;
- Collaboration with external agencies supporting children and families e.g. Meitheal.

4.1.7. Attendance targets are reviewed formally at least once each term as part of the DEIS Action Planning cycle. Outcomes are evaluated using attendance data and qualitative feedback from pupils, parents and staff to determine the effectiveness of interventions.

4.1.8. Where targets have been achieved, new targets are established to promote continued improvement. Where targets have not been achieved, interventions are reviewed and adapted to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the school community.

4.1.9. Through this process of continuous monitoring, evaluation and improvement, the school seeks to foster a positive attendance culture where every pupil is supported to attend school regularly, participate fully in school life and achieve their full educational potential.

4.2. Whole school approaches to promoting good attendance

4.2.1. Creating a safe, supportive and welcoming environment. This begins each morning with the staff on morning duty at the school entrance, actively meeting and greeting the pupils. A particular focus is placed on supporting any students experiencing anxiety leaving a parent/guardian in a sensitive and needs based manner.

4.2.2. Every September we inform all parents in our school newsletter, Le Chéile of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

4.2.3. A special reward system is in place to promote good attendance at school. Children with full attendance and those who missed up to two days for the academic year are awarded prizes and certificates the following September.

4.2.4. 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. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

4.2.5. At our monthly assemblies the class with the highest attendance level from Stage 1 & 2 and Stage 3 & 4 are acknowledged and awarded prizes. We also acknowledge individuals and classes with the most improved attendance.

4.2.6. Attendance and punctuality are discussed at parent/teacher meetings.

4.2.7. An Attendance Committee meets bi-monthly comprising of the Principal, DP, Lead Assistant Principal, HSCL and SCP. The Committee meets formally on a bi-monthly basis to review attendance data, identify pupils at risk of poor attendance, coordinate early intervention measures and provide appropriate support to pupils and families.

4.2.8. Class teachers facilitate a calm and welcoming assembling time, by chatting informally to the children until formal teaching time begins.

4.2.9. A calendar is published in term 3 for the coming academic year to allow families to plan holidays, breaks etc during school holidays and avoid possible absences from school during term time.

4.2.10. The school has an after school childcare facility adjacent to the school; After School, which helps parents with childcare arrangements.

4.2.11. Our school website and social media promotes good attendance.

4.2.12. Discouraging Parent(s)/Guardian(s) from taking holidays during school time. The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are reminded that their child will miss schoolwork and that they have a legal duty to notify the Principal about the reasons for their child's absence, Section 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000).

4.2.13. Principal and DP visit to classrooms and carry out monthly assemblies to promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in positive and supportive language.

4.2.14 The Attendance Committee plans and implements a range of targeted attendance promotion initiatives each year, informed by the school's attendance data and DEIS Action Plan targets. These initiatives seek to improve attendance by strengthening pupils' engagement with school, recognising positive attendance habits, building positive relationships, and encouraging pupils to value regular school attendance as an important part of their learning and wellbeing.

4.2.15. Reporting monthly school attendance percentages on Le Chéile (school newsletter).

4.2.16. The school informs parents/guardians that standardised testing requires careful timetabling and the deployment of support staff. Parents/guardians are asked to avoid arranging holidays during the period of annual standardised testing. Testing takes place in May over a couple of weeks.

4.2.17. The school introduced a new attendance procedure in 2026/27, with attendance postcards sent to all families twice during the year. These provide a clear visual update on each child's attendance and help ensure that parents receive a consistent message and remain informed throughout the year. .

4.3. Responding to poor attendance

4.3.1. Each class teacher will monitor the attendance in their classes. Class teachers will consult with the HSCL and DP where there are concerns around absences.

4.3.2. Monitoring children at risk of low attendance and early intervention is a priority. Staff will be vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as socio-economic factors, bullying etc. are identified early.

4.3.3. The school may prevent pupils leaving school during school hours unless they are collected by a parent/guardian and signed out at reception.

4.3.4. A problem-solving framework/attendance plan will be drawn up to address school attendance concerns for individual children as necessary, but no later than 15 days absence in one school year.

4.3.5. Irregular attendance and punctuality is monitored and investigated promptly. The assistance of the EWO will be utilised. In accordance with Section 21 of the Act, the school informs the EWO if a child is absent for more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

4.3.6 If the school is concerned about a student's attendance, an Educational Welfare Referral can be made to TESS.

4.3.7. A record is kept of pupils who arrive at school after the appointed time or leave the school early. It is recorded on our internal school database, Aladdin by the school secretary.

4.3.8. School attendance is monitored throughout the school year. Where a pupil's absences exceed 8 days, parents/guardians are notified by text message. If absences exceed 12 days, a further text message is sent and the HSCL also contacts the parent/guardian by phone. Where absences reach 15 days, parents/guardians are notified by text message and a letter is issued by the school requesting a meeting to discuss the pupil's attendance. Where a pupil has been absent for 20 days or more during the school year, parents/guardians are informed in writing. In accordance with statutory requirements, this information is also reported to Tusla.

4.3.9. When an individual child has exceeded 20 days absent by a large amount, the parents/guardians will be asked to discuss the matter with the Principal/DP.

4.3.10. Where there are a few members of the same family, the parents will be asked to come and discuss how to improve the attendance with the Principal/DP.

4.3.11. The children with much improved attendance will be recognised for improved attendance. This is to recognise a child who has improved his/her record from the previous year by achieving 19 or less days absence

5. Communication With Other Schools

5.1. Under section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Principal of a child's current school must inform the Principal of the child's previous school, via POD (Primary Online Database), that the child is now registered in their school.

5.2. When a Principal receives notification that a student has been registered in another school they must notify the Principal of the new school of any concerns regarding attendance and of such matters relating to the student's educational needs as considered appropriate. This applies to students who transfer between primary schools and to those who transfer from primary to post-primary education.

5.3. When a student transfers into St. Anne's N.S. from another school within or outside the state, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to their previous school via POD, and appropriate records sought.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy under the guidance of the BoM. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the Principal /DP processes the returns to TESS.

6.1. Role of Principal and Deputy Principal (DP)

- Ensure that pupils' records are maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Acknowledge good and improved attendance.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- Regularly update and monitor Student Absence Report overview.
- Inform parents of the educational impact of removing students from school on a regular basis.
- The School Principal will make an Educational Welfare Referral to Tusla Education Support Services (TESS), where there is a concern in relation to the School attendance of a pupil and has exhausted in-school interventions.
- The Daily Attendance Record (Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil) is updated on Aladdin automatically. It is monitored by the DP.

- Teachers consult with the DP/ Principal and HSCL where there are concerns around absences.
- Chair bi-monthly Attendance Committee meetings
- Inform parents of a decision to contact TESS of concerns regarding a pupil
- The School Principal/DP will complete a formal Reduced School Day (RSD) Notification, for any student to whom this applies to TESS via the Tusla Portal.
- The School attempts to minimise reduced timetables, suspension and expulsions. The School Principal/ DP will inform TESS, where:
    - There is an intention to expel a pupil and also will notify TESS when the expulsion has been confirmed.
    - A student has been suspended for a period of six consecutive days.

6.2. Role of Attendance Coordinator & HSCL

- Use the Aladdin system to monitor trends and patterns in attendance. The Attendance Coordinator will identify specific times of the school year when attendance levels are lower. In doing so they will be able to monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups or individuals.
- Co-ordinate with the school office for attendance reminder and update to be sent to parents at the end of October, December and March yearly.
- Home visits to target families by HSCL to promote school activities and encourage parental involvement
- Attendance Coordinator submits a report of any student who has been absent 20 days or more by submitting Student Absence Reports (SAR) twice each year. The designated Assistant Principal will submit the SAR for Period 2 (end-Dec) and Period 4 (end- June) to TESS.
- Liaise with the Attendance Committee to collaboratively identify children with consistently poor patterns of attendance and support these individuals to improve attendance/punctuality. This will include targeting a number of pupils for intervention each year.
- In addition, meetings with the pupil or their parents, creating targeted support and/or liaising with the HSCL and/or EWO for intervention may be necessary.
- The Attendance Co-ordinator will submit an Annual Attendance Report (AAR) at the end of the academic year which reports the total number of days lost through absence, to TESS. Inform TUSLA, if a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
- File returns to NEWB as required
- Where absences exceed 12 days, a text message is sent and the HSCL also contacts the parent/guardian for a supportive phonecall. The HSCL will be present for a supportive meeting when absences reach 15 days with parents/guardians.
- Include attendance data on reports when a pupil is transferring to post primary schools/ other primary schools in line with Data Protection Requirements and Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000).

6.3. Role of School Completion Worker (SCP)

SCP provides a Project Worker to conduct in-school support for children who have been identified as at risk of early school leaving. SCP provides a broad range of targeted supports, interventions and programmes and can include key work (targeted) interventions and in-class evidence based programmes (universal).

SCP works under a national Intake Referral Process under TESS within an integrated working approach under three strands including the SCP, the HSCL Coordinators and the EWOs.

The three core objectives of the SCP programme are to improve attendance, enhance participation, increase retention and overall positive educational outcomes for children.

SCP endeavours to achieve these objectives through the interventions and activities outlined below (and subject to funding and availability of resources):

- Establish and maintain positive relationships with targeted children working within Restorative Practice and Trauma Informed approach.
- Therapeutic interventions aimed at building and developing social and emotional skills utilising evidenced-based programmes such as BOTVIN LifeSkills or, daily practices to support emotional regulation such as, social stories, relaxation and mindfulness.
- Provide a welcoming space that promotes trusting relationships and school connectedness through participation and child-led activities. These activities can be based on individual special interests including but not limited to art; dance; movement; sport; boardgames, practical lifeskills, sensory play and music.
- Facilitate in-class programmes relevant to identified trends, patterns and needs of the class cohort examples include; Connect Safely (Internet Safety) and Post-Primary Transition programmes.
- Early intervention at primary school level to target foundational engagement, emotional regulation and good school attendance habits to support the child's educational journey.
- Contribute to the planning and execution of fun and engaging holiday programmes under a combined approach from DEIS Summer programme and the SCP.
- Work collaboratively with TESS, the HSCL, the EWO and the wider school team to support positive educational outcomes for children and their families, liaising with external agencies where appropriate.
- Support the HSCL with the referral process (Targeted/Universal supports) and contribute to a partnership approach to ensure parental voice and consent are paramount.
- Work closely with the HSCL and parents to ensure timely referral and signposting to appropriate community services such as Youth Groups, Garda Diversion Programmes and Family Support services.
- Establish a group in Term 2 each year for targeted children with a view to improving attendance and participation from Term 1.

**It is the intention of the school to work alongside SCP to provide a homework club for targeted children (Monday to Thursday)

6.4. Role of Class Teacher

- Maintain the school attendance records in accordance with procedure. Roll call to be taken at 9.50am daily.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Deputy Principal and HSCL of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- Whole class graphs - to highlight good achievement and improvement
- Inform the parent(s) at the Parent Teacher Meeting of their child's attendance record and punctuality. Discuss any concerns or issues parents may have regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Include the total number of absences on the Annual report and provide a comment on attendance.

6.5. Role of TESS (TUSLA)

- Promote and foster in our school community, an appreciation of the benefits to be derived from education
- Promote and foster an environment that encourages children to attend school and to participate fully in the life of the school

- Assist children and parents of children who are not attending school on a regular basis
- Assist schools in drawing up strategies and programmes aimed at preventing non-attendance in schools.
- Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
- Work with the School and TUSLA to resolve any attendance problems;
- Notify the school in writing/via email of any planned absences during the school year. Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21(9) of Education(Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore the school cannot give permission for holiday absences during term time.

6.6. Role of Parent/Guardian

- Show an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Encourage children to participate in school activities.
- Praise and encourage their children's achievements.
- Inform the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school. Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unexplained or have not been communicated. This happens through Aladdin Connect.
- St. Anne's N.S. is open to receive pupils from 8.40am. The bell rings at 8.50am and formal instruction begins at 8.50am. It is very important that children arrive into class at 8.50am. This allows children to settle in, interact with their teacher, SNA, friends and to engage with activities.
- Ensure, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Provide evidence of appointments in advance of the appointment date to be logged in the school office along with reason for leaving school early.
- Contact the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- Notify the school in writing/email if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

6.7. Role of Pupil

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Give written absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Pass school correspondence to their parents promptly.

7. Evaluation

The success of the strategy for school attendance will be measured through;

- Accurate data including absence reasons available to administrative staff on Aladdin.
- Children's positive dispositions toward attendance and punctuality.
- Positive working relationships between home and school in finding solutions to problems around attendance and punctuality.
- Teacher observations and reports to Tusla.

8. Ratification & Review

The Statement of Strategy for School Attendance will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by representatives from the relevant sections of the school community and will be reviewed every three years by the BoM of St. Anne's N.S. Notably, the targets and actions within the theme of

Attendance will be reviewed and monitored at least twice yearly as part of DEIS Action Planning for School Improvement.

The policy was ratified by the BoM on the 6th October 2026. It will be appropriately communicated to members of the school community and made available on our school's website.

This Strategy was submitted to TUSLA on on 7th October 2026.

Debbie Clarke
Chairperson of BoM

George McAdam
Principal