

St. Patrick's Loreto Primary School

Attendance Policy

The aims of the attendance policy in St. Patrick's Loreto Primary School are

- to ensure, insofar as possible, that pupils 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 responsibility as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act
- identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school 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
- identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance

The school will ensure that

- the importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school
- pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- pupil attendance is recorded daily
- parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated
- pupil attendance and punctuality is monitored
- school attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - the National Education Welfare Board
 - the Education Welfare Officer
 - the Board of Management

Punctuality

School begins at 8.50 a.m. All pupils are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education (Welfare) Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the National Education Welfare Board.

Guidance for Parents

As stated in the school's Code of Behaviour (cf Paragraph 11), ***“Parents/Guardians are obliged, by the Education Welfare Act 2000, to explain their child's absence from school”***. Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: “a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The Principal cannot authorise a child's absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

- Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school.
- When the child returns to school after an absence, parents/guardians should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence.
- These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.
- The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school.
- Teachers will not assign work for children who are absent from school because of holidays.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason
- working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- making sure their children understand that they, as parents, support consistent school attendance
- discussing planned absences with the school
- refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- encouraging their children to participate in school activities
- praising and encouraging their children's achievements
- instilling 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, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours
- 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

Children

- Children have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Children should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Children are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Children are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

A strategy for promoting good school 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 will endeavour to ensure that

- the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child
- the school will promote the development of positive self-concept and self-worth in the children
- supports for children, 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 children
- the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised
- the attendance rates of children 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 (in such instances, the parents/guardians may be contacted by letter, when the child has reached 15 days absence)
- children with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- ensure that the school register of children 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
- inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil
- insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among children, parents and staff

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- monitor pupil attendance and punctuality
- monitor patterns of absence in respect of individual children about whom they may be concerned
- maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure
- keep a record of explained and unexplained absences(explanatory notes should be retained for the duration of the academic year)
- contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing
- promote a reward system for children with exceptional attendance
- encourage children to attend regularly and punctually
- inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil
- inform the Principal when an individual child has been absent for 15 days

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act

- attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as written notification of transfer is received

- attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school
- attendance, behaviour and academic records of children transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed