

# *Statement of Strategy for Pupil Attendance.*

*2019/2020*

*St. Patrick's National School.*



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### **RATIONALE:**

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents, Board of Management and Educational Welfare Officer in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in St. Patrick's National School to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school.

### **REWARDING OF STUDENTS WITH GOOD ATTENDANCE:**

Targeting good attendance is part of our school action plan. Students with good attendance may be rewarded in the following ways:

- ✓ Presenting certificates and homework passes to pupils who have full attendance at the end of each term and end of year.

### **STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE:**

The following strategies will be employed to improve attendance:

- ✓ The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- ✓ St. Patrick's National School will promote development of good self-esteem and self-worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).
- ✓ Support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines.
- ✓ Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the Principal/Deputy Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- ✓ The school will use regular newsletters and web texts to promote attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Where concerns arise, the class teacher or secretary monitoring attendance brings the concern to the attention of the principal/deputy principal.
- ✓ The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- ✓ The class teacher will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained. A standard template is used for this purpose and is found at the back of the child's homework journal.
- ✓ The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance on Aladdin.
- ✓ Attendance figures are monitored daily by the secretary on Aladdin.

- ✓ The secretary will also bring details of continued absences and patterns of absences to the attention of the class teachers and the Principal as necessary.
- ✓ The Principal will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- ✓ Attendance will be featured as part of monthly school assemblies.
- ✓ The Principal will inform the NEWB:
  - When a pupil has been missing for twenty or more days during the course of the school year.
  - When a pupil has been suspended from school more than once under the Code of Behaviour.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS:**

The following strategies may be employed to identify students at risk of developing school attendance problems:

- ✓ On transfer to St. Patrick's National School, attendance records will be sought from previous schools on pupil attendance.
- ✓ Class teachers will inform the Principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- ✓ Contact with various agencies who are involved with such students.

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSER CONTACTS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND HOME:**

Closer home/school relations will be fostered through:

- ✓ Meetings with Parents' Association chairperson.
- ✓ Attendance at meetings (Parent/Teacher, etc).
- ✓ Promotion of Parent Courses.
- ✓ Attendance at Fun Sports Day.
- ✓ Attendance at school events (eg Concerts, Masses, etc).
- ✓ Regular newsletters to families.
- ✓ Open-door policy in Principal's office for daily communication.
- ✓ Notification when pupil's absence has reached 15 days (See Appendix A)
- ✓ Notification when pupil's absence has reached reporting threshold of 20 days (See Appendix B)

**FOSTERING CONTACTS:**

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

- ✓ NEWB.
- ✓ NEPS.
- ✓ After school care providers.

**IDENTIFICATION OF ASPECTS AND STRATEGIES:**

The Board of Management, teachers and whole school community will be mindful at all times of:

- ✓ The identification of aspects of the operation and management of the school and of the teaching of the school curriculum that may contribute to problems relating to school attendance on the part of certain students.
- ✓ The identification of strategies for the removal of those aspects in so far as they are not necessary or expedient for the proper and effective running of the school having regard, in particular, to the educational needs of students.
- ✓ The identification of strategies that will encourage more regular attendance at school on the part of such students.
- ✓ The need to review this strategy into the future to accommodate the changing needs of the school and of its population.

**REVIEW**

The policy is due for review in 2024/2025.

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Principal

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Chairperson of Board of Management

## Appendix A

Dear Parents,

As is our policy, I am writing to you regarding \_\_\_\_\_ attendance at school who has been absent for \_\_\_\_ days on \_\_\_\_\_.

We wish to inform you that once a child reaches 20 days' absence, the school must pass the information to the Educational Welfare Service of Tusla - Child and Family Agency. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you to discuss the matter further.

If you have not already done so, please furnish your child's class teacher with a written explanation of absences for our records.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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David Gallagher

Principal

## Appendix B

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding \_\_\_\_\_ attendance at school who has been absent for \_\_\_\_ days as outlined in our Attendance Policy.

As a result, \_\_\_\_\_ has now been absent for 20 days, the school must pass the information to the Educational Welfare Service of Tusla - Child and Family Agency. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you to discuss the matter further.

If you have not already done so, please furnish your child's class teacher with explanation for absences in writing for our records.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

David Gallagher

Principal

## Appendix C

Dear Parents,

I am writing to tell you a little about the Education Welfare Act, 2000 (amended by the Child and family Agency Act 2013) and about some of the responsibilities we share under the Act.

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to obtain secure employment and develop into mature and responsible citizens. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every child stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school whichever comes later.

*As a parent, you must let the school know if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that reasons must be given in writing. The school will notify Tusla – Child and Family Agency if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.*

*If your child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by Tusla - Child and Family Agency. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education.*

*Further information concerning the new service and about school attendance matters generally can be obtained from the national Lo-Call Education Helpline - 1890 36 36 66.*

Yours Sincerely,

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David Gallagher

Principal