



Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school is regarded as integral to St Vincent de Paul Senior School in upholding and maintaining the ethos of nurturing each child's potential in a caring environment where the welfare of all pupils is paramount.

The Board of Management, parents and staff of St Vincent De Paul Senior Primary School are committed to working together to ensure maximum attendance of pupils. We believe that we need to work together and co-operate in the implementation of this policy.

Rationale

While St Vincent de Paul Senior School has an excellent record of attendance, every opportunity is taken by the Principal and teachers to emphasise the importance of being in school every day.

Every child to whom the School Attendance Act applies is obliged by law to attend school every day the school is in operation, unless there is a reasonable reason for not attending. The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 provides a framework for promoting regular school attendance, tackling the problem of absenteeism and early school leaving. All parents have a duty to have their children at school every day and on time in accordance with Section 17 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

St Vincent de Paul Senior School aims to create a pleasant and happy school atmosphere conducive to learning and encouraging of attendance. We aim to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Teachers endeavour to provide learning opportunities for the pupils of our school that are engaging, interesting and accessible for all. This is achieved through a broad and varied use of methodologies and strategies across and beyond the curriculum. The learning environment at St Vincent de Paul Senior School is child-centred and inclusive for all.

Aims and Objectives:

The aims of the School Attendance Policy of St Vincent de Paul Senior School:

- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually
- Foster the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community
- Enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- Comply with legal requirements under the Education Welfare Act, 2000
- 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 links between school and families of children who are 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
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to: (a) TUSLA, (b) The Education Welfare Officer, (c) The Board of Management

Defining and Recording Non- Attendance

“A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at ‘a national school or other suitable school’ on each day that the school is open for instruction.”
Education Welfare Act 2000.

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on the ‘Aladdin’ database of each class on a daily basis. This automatically updates the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) which is held on ‘Aladdin’ along with the annual attendance of each individual pupil being recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register) which is also available and updated automatically on ‘Aladdin’.

The following applies:

- A child is expected to attend each day
- Non-attendance is recorded in the roll book on Aladdin
- Parents/guardians record reason for absence on Aladdin Connect in accordance with the Education Act 1998
- All explanatory notes are kept on student’s file (Aladdin)
- The category of absence is also identified and recorded (Aladdin)
- If an explanatory note (via Aladdin Connect) is not forthcoming the school secretary will contact the parents requesting a letter of explanation. If not supplied after this request the absence will be recorded as unexplained.
- All children are expected to complete a full day at school

Punctuality:

School begins at 9am and finishes at 2:40pm (Mid-morning break 10:25 – 10:40am.

Lunch break 12.45 – 1.10pm).

School gates open at 8:50am, supervision is in place until 9am.

All pupils are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.

The Principal will liaise with the parents of children who are continually late to discuss strategies to improve punctuality. If, following school intervention and strategies having been put in place, punctuality does not improve, the Principal will report the case to the Education Welfare Officer for further intervention and action.



Late Arrival/Early Collection of a Pupil during School Day:

Pupils are expected to be at school on time each day. It is expected that all pupils remain in school for a full school day. In St Vincent de Paul Senior School the attendance of each pupil is recorded electronically on the Aladdin School Management System on a daily basis in accordance with Circular 33/2015.

1. The school Rolla is taken daily at 10:15am. If a child arrives late due to an unavoidable reason, such as a medical appointment, this late arrival will be recorded as Absent, but LATE note will be added to the child's attendance.
2. If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable reason such as a medical appointment, a note should be communicated by parents/guardians, in advance via Aladdin Connect.
3. If a child is sick during the school day, the secretary will firstly ring the parent and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. Parents must ensure all contact details and emergency numbers are up to date.
4. The principal/deputy principal must be informed of children being sent home due to illness
5. When collecting a child during the school day, the parent/guardian **must** report to the school office, sign out the child and wait in reception while the secretary organises the collection of the child from the classroom.

Please note:

No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than her parent/guardian/nominated contact person. This must be communicated to the school in advance of collection of the child.



Early Identifications and Strategies for improving Attendance:

- When a teacher notices the start of irregular attendance, parents are contacted with a view to improving the situation.
- Strategies will be developed, appropriate to each situation, in collaboration and consultation with the child, parents/guardians and class teacher/SET (where applicable) to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. For example, aim to identify source of the problem.
- Where necessary and appropriate to do so the Curriculum may be modified or extra help given to the pupils, where appropriate.
- A reward system may be used to promote good and/or improved attendance.
- Principal will talk to the parent(s) about the matter and remind them of their statutory duty to ensure that their child is sent to school and to explore in what way the school can assist
- When a child has missed 10/15/20 days a standard text will be sent as a reminder, highlighting this, regardless of absence
- A letter and Aladdin notification will be sent when a child is 15 days absent to highlight this and encourage improved attendance
- The Principal may formally contact a parent if improvement is not seen following this communication
- A letter and Aladdin notification will be sent to parents of pupils who have missed 20 days or more, regardless of reason for absences, informing them that this information will be reported to TUSLA and the Board of Management
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO-TUSLA) and Principal will work together to support families of children with particularly poor attendance if necessary
- Attendance will be reported to parents half way through the school year during Parent Teacher Meeting and on the end of year school report
- The School Calendar for the coming school year is published annually (by the final school term) for the following school year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events during school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.



Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management

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 curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in children
- Support for pupils with additional needs are in place in accordance with Department of Education Guidelines
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised, if necessary
- The attendance rates of the pupils will be monitored by class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding attendance of any child
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve poor attendance

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer/TUSLA:
 - (a) if a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - (b) When a pupil has been absent for 20 days or more during the course of the school year.
 - (c) If a pupil has been suspended
- 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 pupils, parents and staff.

The Class Teacher

The Class Teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences (Aladdin)
- Ask the school secretary to contact parents in instances where absences are unexplained
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding attendance/punctuality of any pupil
- Contact parents/guardians where punctuality concerns begin to arise



Parents/Guardians

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 TUSLA to resolve any attendance problems
- Informing the school of planned absences
- Refraining from taking holidays during school time as per TUSLA recommendation
<https://www.tusla.ie/tess/information-for-parents-and-guardians-tess/education-welfare-service/>
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- 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 via Aladdin Connect the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Notifying the class teacher if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.
- Ensuring that changes regarding home time collections arrangements are communicated to the child prior to coming to school.

Communication

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from St Vincent de Paul Senior School to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc. (end of year report) may be forwarded upon receipt of written request from the new school
- When a child transfers from another school to St Vincent de Paul Senior School, confirmation of enrolment will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring St Vincent de Paul Senior School to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment – NCCA Education passport

Communication with Parents

The following applies in terms of communicating with the parents:

- Attendance Policy published on school website
- School calendar for next school year communicated in June of the previous school year
- Reminders of importance of punctuality and attendance in newsletter
- When a child has missed 10 days of school a standard text, regardless of reason for absence, to notify and remind parents that their child has missed 10 days (2 weeks) of school is sent



- 15-day absence letter - Standard letter sent to parents, regardless for reason for absence, to notify them that their child has missed 15 days (3 weeks) of school
 - 20-day absence letter – Standard letter sent to parents, regardless of reason for absence, to notify parents that the absence is now reported to TUSLA.
 - Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November of every school year. Parents will be informed of how many days a child has missed of school at this meeting
 - End of school report communicates the number of days missed in the school year.
 - Parents will be contacted when appropriate and as outlined above in this document
- The school circulates this information regarding attendance at the information meeting of the incoming 2nd class parents/guardians and on other occasions, such as open days.

Communication with TUSLA/Education Welfare Officer

We are obliged to inform TUSLA if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days.

We are obliged to furnish TUSLA with numbers of pupils absent for 20 days or more on two occasions during the school year.

The Board of Management is also informed of the numbers of students who have missed 20 days or more at school

Evaluation

The success of this Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Maintenance and improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar Rolla (Aladdin) records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Improvement on punctuality of children
- Positive parental feedback and cooperation with policy in its entirety
- Teacher vigilance in terms of poor attenders

This policy was drawn up in consultation and collaboration with staff, parents and Board of Management of St Vincent de Paul Senior School.

This policy was updated by the Board of Management in June 2024 and will come into effect from September 2024.

Signed:

_____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

_____ (Principal)