



**St. Patrick's N.S.
Ballylinan.**

School Attendance Strategy

Ballylinan National School

17064U



Name of school: St. Patrick's N.S., Ballylinan
Address of school: Ballylinan, Athy, Co. Laois, R14HK31.
Roll Number: 17064U

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

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

The vision of St. Patrick's N.S. is to foster the spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing of the children entrusted to our care. We endeavour to provide a sound education which is holistic in approach and tailored to the individual child's needs. This vision may only be realised through positive school experiences and high attendance levels.

We, in St. Patrick's N.S., aim to work together with parents and guardians to foster positive attitudes to regular school attendance and learning.

The Aims of this Statement of Strategy

- To comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000
- To ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- To ensure that pupils' attendance is recorded daily
- To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes towards learning.
- To develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and families of children at risk of poor attendance.
- To identify and remove (insofar as practicable) obstacles to school attendance.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

The school's high expectations around attendance

St. Patrick's N.S. recognises that attendance is crucial for establishing and maintaining effective teaching and learning and for the development of our children.

We expect that students will arrive promptly for school each morning at 9.15am and are collected at 2.00pm (for infants) or 3.00pm (1st – 6th classes).

We expect children to have full attendance at school unless they are ill, have medical appointments or an urgent family reason.

We aim to build a culture of high expectation around attendance and punctuality.

How attendance will be monitored



All class teachers take a daily roll call which is recorded on the school's datasoftware programme, Aladdin. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open, their absence will be recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin. When a child is marked absent, this triggers the sending of an automatic message to parents/guardians, via Aladdin, following which they can submit the reason for absence. If no reason is submitted, this absence is recorded as 'unexplained'.

If a teacher is concerned about a pupil's absence, they alert relevant staff (Deputy Principal or Principal).

The roll call is taken by 9:50am each day. The annual attendance of each pupil is recorded on Aladdin and is printed on each child's end of year school report.

Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged, unless absolutely necessary. All late arrivals will be recorded on Aladdin. Late arrivals must check in at the front office and the arrival time will be logged on Aladdin by the school secretary. For early departures, a parent/guardian must sign their child out of school on a record sheet at school reception. This will also be logged on Aladdin by the school secretary.

The school will contact parents/guardians of children who are consistently late.

Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance

➤ Whole-School Approach

At St. Patrick's N.S., Ballylinan, children, parents, staff and the Board of Management work in partnership to provide the best education for our pupils. We believe that consistent attendance is necessary to facilitate the education of the children. The whole-school approach to attendance is as follows:

- To promote a positive learning environment
- Child attendance is inputted daily by each class teacher by 9:50am
- To promote a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected which gives children a voice in school matters
- To encourage full attendance, where possible, raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- To encourage punctuality
- Identifying children at risk
- Acknowledging good attendance and marked improvements in attendance

➤ Target setting and Targets

The following data was collected from a review of the attendance figures for the previous 3 school years:

2021 - 2022

- The average attendance in the 2021-2022 school year was 88.1%. 31.4% of pupils missed more than 20 days in the school year.



- The month with the lowest attendance was December (81.5%)

2022 - 2023

- The average attendance in the 2022-2023 school year was 91.2%.
- 18.1% of pupils missed more than 20 days in the school year.
- The month with the lowest attendance was December (83.5%)

2023 - 2024

- The average attendance in the 2023-2024 school year was 92.2%.
- 16.2% of pupils missed more than 20 days in the school year.
- The month with the lowest attendance was March (88.9%)

It is obviously worth noting that the attendance figures for the 2021-2022 school year were heavily impacted by Covid. Children were still required to isolate and remain at home for lengthy periods once they had contracted Covid.

Upon reflection on these statistics, we have set the following targets:

- To increase the average attendance to 94%.
- To reduce the percentage of pupils who miss 20 days or more to:
 - 12% in 2024-2025
 - 10% in 2025-2026
 - 8.5% in 2026-2027.
- To increase attendance in both December and March to 90%.

➤ **Promoting Good Attendance**

The following are strategies employed by the school to promote good attendance:

- Promote a positive learning environment.
- Staff presence in the yard each morning from 9:05am.
- Facilitate active discussion about attendance at Parents' Association meetings, annual Parent-Teacher meetings and information meetings for new parents.
- Place regular updates about attendance in the school newsletter or on the school website.
- Give positive affirmation around attendance when taking the roll.
- Highlight the importance of good attendance and our high expectation of same at school assemblies.
- Provide a record of children's attendance in the annual school report.
- Distribute Tusla's Educational Welfare Services' leaflet entitled 'Don't Let Your Child Miss Out' at new parents' information event.
- Furnish families with the school calendar for the upcoming academic year in good time (by April of the current year for the following year) to make parents/guardians aware of school holidays in an effort to avoid holidays being taken during term time.

➤ **Responding to Poor Attendance**

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S., Ballylinan acknowledges that, despite the best efforts of the school and of families, some children will require additional support to prevent patterns of



poor attendance developing. The following are strategies employed by the school to respond to poor attendance:

- Working with groups or individuals who may need additional support
- Engaging in early dialogue with parents and pupils
- Referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services

School roles in relation to attendance

➤ **Roles of the Principal:**

- Ensure that the school register of children is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Engage with parents/guardians regarding attendance concerns
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school's Attendance Strategy
- View the attendance statistics on Aladdin on a regular basis in order to observe trends
- Make periodic returns to Tusla and notify Tusla's Educational Welfare Services (EWS) and the relevant Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) of particular problems in relation to attendance and offer support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.
- Responsible for ensuring accurate records of students' attendance is kept at the school and the reasons for any failure to attend.

➤ **Deputy Principal:**

- Responsible for sending Aladdin notification to parents when child has missed 15 and 20 days.
- Liaise with Principal and submit referrals to EWS, if deemed necessary.
- Ensures appropriate contact takes place between the school and parent/guardians either via note, phone call, text message e.g. text when child has missed 5 and 10 days.

➤ **Roles of the Secretary:**

- Record late arrivals and early departures on Aladdin.
- Provide daily reminder to teachers to record attendance.

➤ **Roles of the Class teacher:**

- Create a classroom environment that supports participation and engagement, especially for students who may be at risk of poor attendance.
- Use their own attendance and punctuality to lead by example.
- Maintain accurate class rolls by completing Aladdin daily (by 10:00a.m.) and takes responsibility for recording student absences within their classes.
- Monitor pupil attendance and punctuality, explained and unexplained absences, paying attention to patterns of absenteeism in relation to children about whom they may be concerned.
- Record late arrivals and early collections in the absence of the school secretary.
- Alert relevant staff (i.e. Principal/Deputy Principal) if there are concerns about student absences.
- Ensure appropriate discussion takes place between the school and parent/guardians if an attendance concern arises.
- Support students upon return when they have missed periods of schooling.



- Give child's attendance record to parents at the parent teacher meeting and in the end of year reports.
- **Parents/Guardians:**
 - Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality.
 - Show interest in what their child is doing in school.
 - Consult with the school on their child's progress.
 - Attend parent/teacher meetings.
 - Speak to the class teacher about any concerns they may have.
 - Praise their child's efforts at every opportunity. Their encouragement means a lot and will motivate their child to continue trying
 - Inform the school, via Aladdin, when their child cannot attend school, giving the reason why.
 - Avoid, where possible, taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason.
 - Refrain, where possible, from taking their child on holidays during term time.

Partnership arrangements

The Board of Management acknowledges the importance of partnership arrangements and a multi-disciplinary approach, where relevant, in supporting the attendance and punctuality of children at school. In relation to attendance, the school community may involve staff members, parents/guardians, students, other schools, community groups and Tusla.

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored

The Board of Management and the principal will monitor the implementation of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance on an ongoing basis by doing the following:

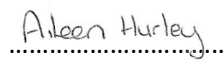
- Provide opportunities for staff to share experiences about how the strategy is working and to review progress towards attendance targets.
- The principal will update the Board of Management on attendance levels at various points throughout the year, with reference to the school's attendance targets.

Review process and date for review

An end of year review of the Statement of Strategy will be conducted as part of the preparation of the Board of Management's annual report on attendance to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services.

This strategy was approved by the BOM on 16/12/24

Signed: 
(Chairperson B.O.M)


(Principal)