

# Attendance Policy

## St. John's Parochial School

### Introduction

This policy document was drawn up by the Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

### Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation
  - ❖ The Education Act, 1998
  - ❖ The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.
- To address any problems of poor attendance and poor punctuality.

### Aims and Objectives

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning, punctuality and good attendance.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- To foster a good and consistent work ethic.

### Compliance with School Ethos

St. John's Parochial School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. The school wishes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance during the school year.

### Policy Content:

#### Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

Parents are asked to make contact with the school before 10 a.m. on the first morning of absence. Contact may be in the form of a telephone call, note or oral message.

If no contact with the school has been made, the child will be supplied with a blank attendance slip on their return to school to be filled out by the parent. The reason for the absence is ticked on the form.

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded daily on Aladdin, the School's Software programme. Class attendance data is kept on record on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on Aladdin together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents/Guardians names).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non attendance will be recorded. The roll call is taken at 10 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day.

All parents/guardians are informed in writing in January and on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

### **Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

- St. John's Parochial School, endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians.
- 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.
- 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.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and is available on the website throughout the year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term. Parents/Guardians should retain the school calendar for reference.
- The Principal, with assistance from class teachers, will present award certificates to pupils who have full attendance during each term.

### **Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance**

Parents of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal and are informed of the school's concerns.

Pupils who reach 20, 40, 60 or 80 days absence in the school year, will be notified of this by letter from the school.

If teachers have a specific concern about a pupil who reaches 20 days absence in the school year, a referral form will be sent to Tusla.

When a child reaches 20 days consecutive absence, a letter will be sent to parents informing them of this and the responsibility of the school to report to Tusla.

- Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'.
- Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.
- In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school.

#### **Transfer to another School**

- Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.
- When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school, of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. **This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

#### **Implementation**

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and consultation with parents.

#### **Success Criteria**

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- An increase in annual attendance rates
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

**Ratification/Communication**

This policy was circulated to parents and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: Jim Styles Date: 12/12/19  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Aime Benton Date: 12/12/19  
Principal

Signed: Heidi Giles Date: 19/12/19  
Parent's Consultation Committee