

St Patrick's Senior National School, Skerries

Attendance Policy

The following documents have been referenced when drafting this policy:

- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Special Education Policy

Rationale

- A. "At St Patrick's SNS, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for pupils in a happy, safe, Christian and inclusive environment. While we value high academic achievement, the social, personal and moral development of our pupils is of primary importance and we view the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation while it cherishes the best educational, cultural and religious traditions of our society. Acknowledging that parents are the primary educators of our children, we are inspired by a shared vision of excellence and we affirm a partnership approach in its pursuit."
- B. As regular attendance at school is an important factor in enabling our pupils to derive maximum benefit from school, promoting good attendance supports our mission statement.

The purpose of this Attendance Policy is to:

- Summarise our approaches to promoting good attendance and addressing attendance related matters.
- Meet the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 22 with regard to the school's Attendance Strategy.

Formulation

- C. This policy was devised by the teaching staff / parents / board members of St Patrick's SNS with reference to relevant circulars from the Department of Education and Skills. It was ratified by the Board of Management on 14th March 2018 and will be reviewed when deemed necessary by the Board of Management.

Aims

- D. Through having this Attendance Policy, we aim:

- To support and sustain the appreciation of learning that is currently in evidence in our school and to highlight its importance for all.
- To heighten awareness of the importance of school attendance and punctuality.
- To clarify procedures around matters relating to attendance.

E. Strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality.

- St Patrick's SNS was established to provide primary education to the parishioners of Skerries. However, pupils of different persuasions attend and their religious / non-religious outlook is respected. The Catholic ethos of the school is inclusive and all pupils are equally welcome, space allowing. We strive to provide a welcoming and supportive learning environment for our pupils, one in which they are valued and respected and in which cognisance is taken of their learning needs.
- St Patrick's SNS's Parents' Association supports the work of the school and parent volunteers assist in a variety of ways such as library volunteers, cake sale organisers helping with sports teams etc. This, combined with a supportive parish and community link, enhances the level of pupil, family and parish / community engagement with the school. The Board of Management direct time and available resources towards maintaining and improving the school building and the general school environment. The staff of the school endeavour to provide as many opportunities as possible to display art work / project work and provide opportunities to work as a school community in order to enhance a feeling of belonging.
- Pupils in St Patrick's SNS enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Provision is made for a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Such opportunities enhance pupils' engagement with school and can positively influence attendance.
- Positive achievements are emphasised (eg sports, science) and celebrated throughout the school in a range of ways, assemblies, displays, announcements, website mention and praise.
- Pupils needing additional support either from their class teachers or SEN teacher in their overall learning, are identified as early as possible and available resources are used to put appropriate supports in place. The needs of each individual child will be recognised.
- Our Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy also support a positive and respectful atmosphere in the school.
- Punctuality and good attendance are encouraged. However, it is the view of the school authorities that a late attendance is preferable to an absence. Each case needs to be afforded different judgement calls by Senior Management.
- Parents are encouraged to engage with the Principal / Deputy Principal at the earliest signs of potential school refusal so as to receive the appropriate support.
- Appointments for children (where feasible) are encouraged out of school hours.
- The school calendar for the upcoming school year is distributed / put on the website in June of the previous year to encourage holidays to be organised within school closures.

F. Key Strategies

- All attendance is recorded daily via Aladdin.
- If a child is absent a note (back of journal) stating the reason should be written for the teacher on the child's return. A call through the office or message directly from a parent will be acceptable in lieu of a note in the journal, but the reason must be recorded on Aladdin.
- A letter including a reminder of parents' obligations under the Education Welfare Act issued annually.
- A standardised letter will be sent via the class teacher and signed by the Principal after 18 days absence (Appendix A).
- Certificates of Attendance will be issued annually to those who have full attendance.

The Policy was brought to the members of the Parents' Association and staff for consultation. The Policy was discussed and ratified by the Board of Management on the 14th March 2018. A review will take place as / when required or when legislation dictates.

This Attendance Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19th September 2018

Signed: V. Nav. O'Leary Shallice
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 19th Sept. 2018

Appendix A

Date.....

Dear Parent / Guardian,

In accordance with the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, we wish to advise you that(pupil's name) has, of this date, been absent from school for day in the current school year.

Absences of more than 20 days (without valid reason) must be reported to Tusla – the Child and Family Agency (www.tusla.ie).

Yours sincerely,

PRINCIPAL TEACHER

CLASS TEACHER