



**St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark (RN: 19259W)**

## **School Attendance Strategy**

**Version 2.0 November 2021**

**Review date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Signed:** *Arthur Hutchinson*

**Arthur Hutchinson, Chairperson BOM**

At the time of drawing up this policy, all details and the enclosed information are correct. It is possible that between now and the review date, changes may have to be made to the provisions, policies and procedures of the school. This may be due to external changes required by the Department of Education and Skills, the school patron or other agencies. Mandatory policies will be available on the school website and up to date information will be posted regularly.

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## Introduction

This policy document was drawn up 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, such as:

- 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.

## Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

## Aims

- 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
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation

## CONTENT

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

The school attendance of individual pupils in each class is recorded daily on Aladdin. Class attendance data is transferred electronically to the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) interface. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is also recorded together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names, Address(s) and Contact Details).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken before 10:30am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Parents/Guardians should notify the school of the reason for any absence via Aladdin Connect. Any notes/letters/emails in relation to absence will be retained by the school. Parents/guardians must also provide a notification if a child will be departing early from school during the school day. This regulation is stated in the School's Code of Behaviour.

Late arrivals enter the school through the main school doors and early departures are recorded at the Secretary's office by parents signing the child out.

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Parents/guardians are informed on the school report at the end of year, of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the principal/teacher where they will be informed of the school's concerns. When a pupil has missed 15 days the school will notify the parents/guardians of this in writing.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer via Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) in the quarterly return, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

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

St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark 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 school calendar for the coming school year is published annually in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term which is strongly discouraged.

### **Communication**

The school has developed a good relationship with Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) the Education Welfare personnel, and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

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

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. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the EWB twice during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than one week following the end of the school year – detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

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## 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.

## 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

## Roles and Responsibilities

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

### School Principal

The school principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer.
  - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
  - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year
  - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register
- 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.

### Post Holder

Emer Mulvaney Assistant Principal 1

### Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school attendance in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupils

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### Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians will ensure that the children are on time for school and that absences are kept to a minimum.

### Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.