



Attendance Policy

**St. Patrick's B.N.S.
17045Q**

Introduction

This policy was introduced as a result of whole staff collaboration, together with the Board of Management to safeguard the welfare of the child and to encourage and support good attendance in school. It was reviewed in full in 2017/18 in light of *Circular 33/2015*, regarding electronic roll books and the school introduction of Aladdin Attendance Management Software.

Rationale

The legislation governing school attendance in Ireland is the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*. There is a strong tradition of good attendance in St. Patrick's B.N.S.. In co-operation with parents, we strive to help each pupil achieve his or her full potential, and so we will promote a positive attitude towards good attendance and punctuality.

Aims:

It is our aim to:

promote a positive attitude among children, towards coming to school

discourage non-attendance for trivial reasons and identify acceptable reasons for absences

ensure all parents are informed of the procedure in place for notifying teacher for reasons of absences

ensure parents are informed of procedures in place for late arrivals / poor attendance.

Reasons for absences

St. Patrick's B.N.S. considers the following acceptable reasons for pupil absence from school:

Illness

Bereavement

Family Circumstances – e.g. illness of family member, family wedding

Holidays during Term Time

Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21(9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore, the school cannot give 'permission' for holiday absences during term time. Schools should strongly discourage parents from taking students on holidays during term time and this should be documented in the school's communication to parents."

If, despite the school's recommendation not to, parents choose to withdraw their child for holidays: Parents should contact the Principal to explain the circumstances in person. This explanation should be placed in writing also, with parents stating they understand the implications.

In these circumstances the **school is not obliged** to provide extra work or homework to the pupil.

It is the parent's responsibility, and not the school's, to assist their child in 'catching up' after a period of such absence.

The school **is not obliged** to repeat any testing or other activity that the pupil may have missed due to holidays.

Such absences will be included in any report made to NEWB, if a pupil reaches 20 days absent during the school year.

Guidelines and Procedures

Individual teachers encourage good attendance and all absences are explained with notes, written by parents in the homework journal.

Good attendance is rewarded by the class teacher, through verbal praise and encouragement. It is also awarded at whole school level through Principal Awards and end of year 'Full Attendance' awards.

Record-Keeping

Attendance records are kept online, through the electronic roll-book system on 'Aladdin'. Electronic format of the roll book is the sole format used in St. Patrick's B.N.S since September 1st, *See DES Circular 0033/2015*

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance at 10:30 a.m. each morning.

Teachers are responsible for recording the reason for absence into the 'Aladdin' system, when the child returns to school and then entering the reason provided.

Teachers are responsible for retaining notes explaining absences and to inform Deputy Principal re: frequent absentees.

The Principal, Deputy Principal and Secretary also have access to all classes' electronic roll book to monitor absences.

Parents to be informed by note / phone if absences are persistent / unexplained, if their child has been absent for 15 days initially and also if they reach 20 days.

Homework journals should be used to correspond with parent / teachers.

Parents are informed immediately (by the Principal or school secretary), if for any reason a child absconds or leaves the school during school hours, unaccompanied. Circumstances surrounding any such departure are to be documented by the teacher / Principal.

Encouraging Attendance

Parents are informed of laws within the *Welfare Act* regarding pupils who are absent for 20 days or more. Namely, that the school must maintain attendance records for all students and inform the TUSLA Child and Family Agency's educational welfare services if a child is absent (for any reason, explained or unexplained) for more than 20 days in a school year.

Parents are notified if there is a concern regarding their attendance and if the child has missed a large number of days.

Parents receive a note when a pupil has missed 10 days in a school year, and will be informed in writing when they have reached 20 days.

Deputy Principal is informed by teachers / Aladdin system regarding non-attendees or frequent absentees.

Analysis of absences is completed quarterly, aided by statistics generated by the electronic system. Where a pattern, or significant number, of absences exists, the Deputy Principal contacts the family and/or the Education Welfare Officer.

Class Full Attendance Certificates are presented weekly. Individual Pupil Rewards are presented for full monthly attendance.

Full Attendance Certificates are presented to all children who achieve a full attendance at the end of each school year. Their names are published on the school website and school newsletter.

Awards may be awarded throughout the year for any pupil with improved attendance and/or punctuality.

School Hours

School opening hours are 8.50 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Break times: 10.40am –10.50am and 12:50pm –1.10 pm.

The school calendar (known closures) is communicated to parents via the school magazine Le Chéile, note home and the school website www.stpatricksboys.net

In June, providing as much detail as possible for the following school year.

In September – providing the complete list of known closures for that school year.

At the beginning of each term – providing reminders for closures.

Any updates are provided as soon as possible.

Punctuality

Children are rewarded verbally and frequently for punctuality and requested to explain the reasons if or when they are not punctual. Improved punctuality can be acknowledged, if appropriate.

The school yard is supervised at 8:30am, until 8:50am, when school commences. At 8:50am all entry doors to the school are closed. Any pupil arriving after this time must enter via the main door by the offices.

Late arrivals are monitored by the Principal, and the teacher may also record the arrival time using the Aladdin system.

Parents of children who are frequently late are contacted by the class teacher and advised of the dates their child was late and asking for their cooperation in ensuring their child/ren is/are punctual regularly.

Children at Risk

These children are brought to the attention of the Principal and Deputy Principal, by class teacher.

Parents are informed of concerns and consulted regarding the absences.

The Principal / Deputy Principal will consult with parents and / or relevant agencies as appropriate.

Reporting Attendance levels

Individual teachers calculate attendances, assisted by the electronic system.

This information is communicated to (and can be accessed at all times by) the Principal and Deputy

Principal and passed on the Board of Management, as appropriate.

Action Plan

Parents are informed about *Attendance Policy* on enrolment and encouraged to ensure their children are attending school as much as possible and also that the children are punctual.

The *Attendance Policy* is available for parents on the school website.

Parents are reminded regularly about guidelines and procedures, each term, through the school newsletter.

Principal and Deputy Principal to oversee running of policy and its implementation

Teachers encourage attendance and inform Deputy Principal and parents of persistent absences.

School Organisation – individual class rolls are taken online by teachers at 10:30 am. Principal, Deputy Principal and Secretary have access to these numbers electronically immediately.

Implementation, Review and Communication

This policy was fully reviewed, in light of *Circular 33/2015*. The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and amend as required.

The policy will be reviewed, as necessary, in the light of experience. There will be a review in May 2019 to assess the effect and support of Aladdin software to the attendance improvement and maintenance in the school. It will be reviewed fully every three years. The school evaluates the success of the policy through:

Analysis of attendance trends, and noting improved attendance / punctuality

Assessment of success through staff feedback