

St. Patrick's N.S., Dalkey

School Attendance Policy

The aims of the attendance policy in St. Patrick's National school are to:

1. Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
2. Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community
3. Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
4. Identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
5. Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
6. Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
7. Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily using the Aladdin System or equivalent system.
- Parents/guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored.
- School attendance certificates are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open at 8.20am and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 8.40am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupil being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under The Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Guidance for Parents/Guardians

Section (21) (9) of the Education Welfare Act states that "a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved". The school Principal cannot authorise a child's absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents/guardians inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated in writing or by email, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications should not be in the homework diary, but on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school he/she should give a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents/guardians when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school.

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Parents/Guardians can promote good school attendance by:

1. Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
2. Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
3. Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
 - Discussing planned absences with the school.
 - Refraining, if possible, from taking holidays during school time.
 - Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
 - Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from the school.
 - Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentist etc.), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
 - Contacting the schools immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.

Pupils

- Pupils have a clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents/guardians to their class teacher.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

1. Supports are in place for pupils, who have special education needs, in accordance with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.
2. A special reward system is in place for promoting good attendance at school.
3. The assistance of the Education Welfare officer will be utilised if necessary.
4. The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
5. Pupils with a poor attendance will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

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 days or more during a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of 6 days or more.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.

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Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns he/she may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Communication of Attendance Record

- Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.
- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school, will be sought directly from the previous school.
- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment is confirmed.
- The school reports annual attendance in the end of year reports.