



# St Francis National School

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## Attendance Policy

*In reading this policy, it should be noted that the term "Parent(s)" also includes Guardians and should be interpreted as such.*

### Introduction

Following collaboration among staff, a suitable school policy on attendance was decided upon in partnership with the Board of Management and Parents.

### Rationale

With the introduction of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 in relation to attendance and an overall desire to reinforce and promote good attendance, the need for such a policy was identified. Under section 21 of the Education Welfare Act, the school principal must maintain a record of the attendance or non-attendance on each school day of each student registered at the school. Information from a student's school attendance record will be required by the Education Welfare Officer if a parent is being prosecuted under Section 25 of the Education Welfare Act.

### Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In co-operation with parents, we strive to help each pupil achieve his full potential, and so we will promote a positive attitude towards good attendance and punctuality.

### Aims

1. A positive attitude among children, towards coming to school
2. To discourage non-attendance for trivial reasons.
3. To ensure all absences are explained by means of a note from parents.  
*(We request that children are not sent to school when ill).*

### Guidelines and Procedures:

- The school encourages good attendance.
- Good attendance is rewarded by celebrating full term and annual attendance (certificates and small prizes).
- All absences must be explained by the Parents via the Aladdin Connect App giving the reason for absence.

### **Record – Keeping**

- Attendance records are kept through the Aladdin Administration system
- Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on Aladdin by 10am; children arriving after this time will be marked as absent.
- Absences should be reported to and explained by parents on the Aladdin Connect App.
- Teachers are responsible for recording absences and written retaining notes re: frequent absentees
- When absences total 5 days, 10 days and again at 15 days, parents will be informed by automatic notification on the Aladdin Connect App.
- Parents are informed immediately by telephone, if for some reason a child "leaves" the school during school hours. Circumstances surrounding the "departure" to be documented by teacher/principal.

### **Encouraging Attendance**

- Parents are informed of the Education Welfare Act regarding pupils who are absent for 20 days or more when enrolling a child and via the school's Parents Handbook and school website.
- Parents will be notified where there is a concern regarding their attendance and if the child has missed a significant number of days.
- Principal is informed by teachers re: non-attendees or frequent absentees.
- Absences are monitored and where necessary, the principal will contact the family and where necessary involve the Education Welfare Officer/ TUSLA.
- Taking children out of school for periods of long duration during term time is discouraged and a class teacher is not expected to provide work or remotely teach in this situation.

### **School Hours**

- School opening hours are 8.45am to 2.30pm (Infants 1.30pm)
- Break Junior Classes 10.45 – 11.00am;  
Senior Classes 11.05 – 11.20am
- Lunch Junior Classes 12.33 – 1.00pm  
Senior Classes 1.00pm – 1.25pm

### **Holidays During Term Time**

Absence from school is one of the biggest barriers to learning for children. Therefore, the school strongly discourages holidays to be taken during school term time.

The annual calendar is communicated to parents in advance of the summer break each year so that holidays and family celebrations can be held outside of school time.

### **Punctuality**

Children are praised for punctuality and good attendance on an on-going basis. Pupils arriving late are requested to enter the school via the main entrance and sign the Late Arrival Book in the office. Parents will be contacted by formal letter where there is a pattern of persistent lateness/ leaving early.

### **Children at Risk (persistent absenteeism/lateness)**

- These children are brought to the attention of principal, by school staff.



- Parents to be invited by the principal to discuss absenteeism when necessary. Parents will receive a formal letter indicating days absent and invitation to meeting in school if necessary as follow up.
- The principal will consult with relevant agencies as appropriate.

### **Reporting Attendance levels**

Individual teachers record attendances. This information is communicated to the Principal and passed on to the Board of Management. TUSLA returns are compiled as routine and returned by the requested date.

### **Early Pick Ups**

Pupils are expected to remain in school for a full school day. Pupils should only be removed early from school in cases of emergency or unavoidable medical appointments.

Parents are requested to avoid any early pick-ups during break times and to make medical appointments out of school hours.

1. Unavoidable medical appointments / Withdrawing a sick child from school  
If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, a letter should be sent in beforehand from parents or a note given on Aladdin. If a child is sick during the school day, we will contact the parents (by Aladdin message or phone call) and if uncontactable, we will ring the emergency contact number. Parents are requested to ensure that all phone numbers are up to date.  
When collecting the child, the parents should report to the school office and the child will be signed out in the Early Pick Up Book. On returning the child after the appointment, the return time will be recorded in the Appointments Record. No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than parents unless written notification has been received beforehand naming the person who is to collect the child.
2. Arriving late to school due to medical appointment or emergency  
Our school day begins at 8.45am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment, written notification should be sent beforehand from parents. The school attendance is taken daily at 10am and arrivals after this time are recorded as absent.
3. Emergencies  
The parents should ring the school en-route and explain the situation. The secretary can then have the child collected from the class and ready to meet the parents. The child will be signed out in the Early Pick Up Book. No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than their parents unless the parents themselves have been in an accident. In such cases, the child will only be released to an immediate family member known to the principal and staff, and named as an Emergency Contact person.

### **Action Plan**

- Parents are informed about attendance policy and encouraged to ensure their children attend school and that they are punctual.
- Board of Management to oversee implementation of the policy.

- School will adhere to legislation governing school attendance (20 days etc.)
- Teachers encourage attendance and inform principal and parents of persistent absences.
- School Organisation – daily class attendance records are kept by teachers using the Aladdin Administration system.
- Attendance figures for each class are reported to the principal in the Leabhar Tinrimh on Aladdin.
- Outside Organisations: collaboration with TUSLA where relevant.

### Success Criteria

Good attendance means that aims that have been outlined are achieved

- Continuity within school curriculum
- Improved overall school attendance
- Assessment of success through staff feedback

### Roles and Responsibility

Development: Whole-staff, Parents and BoM input into initial policy.

Sharing: Secretary will inform Parents via Aladdin message (text/email app) and on the school website.

### Reporting:

1. Individual class records (Class Teacher)
2. TUSLA records (School Secretary & Principal)
3. Attendance (Parents & Pupils)

### Communication

This policy will be available in the Plean Scoile and on the school website.

### Responsibility for Review:

All members of staff, Parent Association, BoM.

### Timeframe for Review:

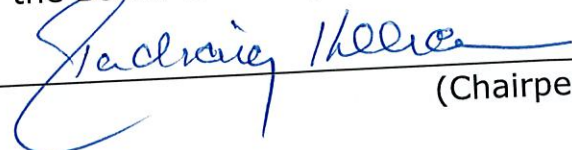
This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required to meet the needs of the school.

**Next review:** December 2026

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## Attendance Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on 13/2/2024 (Date)

Signed:  (Chairperson, Board of Management)